

PEOPLE & THINGS

THERE are welcome signs that the crazily inflated tourist boom in Jamaica may be over and that once again English people may be able to pay a visit to their tropical paradise without having to spend a year's income on their holiday. Here are some facts. At present a room with meals at any first-class hotel in Montego Bay costs just under £17 a day without tips. The rates are the same, or a little less, at other north coast resorts.

Ten days ago, in one of these hotels, a visitor rang three times and telephoned twice for the maid, finally to be told that the maid could not come until the rain had stopped. During a two months' stay this visitor purchased one dry martini. The level of the glass fell half an inch when he had removed the jumbo olive. It cost him 5s. 8d. and the lights in the bar fused while he was drinking it.

The Goose is Cooked

THE hotel proprietors, most of them "plantocrats" who have gravitated to the hotel business since the war, say that their prices are based on Florida standards and that Americans like paying them. You can get an excellent room with meals in most Florida resorts for £7, and the "motels" charge about half that (without meals). Nobody likes paying too much for too little—or washing up their own breakfast dishes, which happened to eighty Americans at one Montego hotel when there was a strike this month.

The hoteliers say they have to make their profits in a three-month season. So do the Swiss. The fact is that the hoteliers made too much money when the pound was devalued. For instance, one new hotel paid off its capital investment in its first year. But this year the season has been bad. In future, Jamaica will have to make less money off more tourists. If this is not achieved the "plantocrats" will soon be back on their plantations, the jungle will reclaim the cocktail bars and Jamaica will lose her second largest source of revenue.

A Point of Law

I WONDER if it would be possible to bring a successful case against a firm whose advertising was so insidious or obnoxious as to derange the mind or monopolise it to the extent of impairing the faculties. It might be argued that this is a form of assault. An American columnist complains that he is being seriously bothered by a slogan advertising coughdrops in the New York Subway. It says "DON'T COUGH 'TILL YOU'RE BLUE IN THE FACE," and he can't get the words out of his mind.

This week there is an advertisement on the backs of London buses which reads "SEE THE COOKY JOCKEY THRU OUR BINOCULI (SORRY)." This truly monstrous string of words riddled my brain as effectively as a burst of machine-gun fire and the advertisement is fortunate that in my paroxysm of rage and abhorrence I did not run my car into the bus and obtain from him, as I think probable, heavy damages.

Miss Lonely-hearts

I AM fascinated to learn that Miss Heather Jenner, who founded the Bond Street Marriage Bureau, is opening a Paris branch in May. This results from the publication in France of her book, "Marriage is My Business," which produced a deluge of correspondence.

On making discreet inquiry, I

By ATTICUS



Miss Heather Jenner

elicited from the attractive and most workmanlike Miss Jenner the following facts: Frenchmen like English wives because Englishwomen are better company and have wider interests. Frenchwomen consider Englishmen as likely to make more reliable husbands than their compatriots. On this side of the Channel many Englishmen incline to the view that French wives are more domesticated, while Englishwomen are sometimes prepared to forgo reliability in return for French "attentiveness."

Miss Jenner takes no sides. She is in the business of making people happy and since this can be achieved by the magic of an attractive pair of eyes or a common interest in brass-rubbing, she regards generalities as valueless.

Back to Opera

A PROPOS, I learn that Sadler's Wells are presenting Rossini's "The Conjured Marriage" next month. I hope that this curiosity—a musical farce composed by Rossini at the age of eighteen—will not run foul of the notorious conservatism of opera audiences. It is one of a number of such challenges which are being brought here by a small but venturesome company from Rome. Animal spirits are all too rare in the opera house where lunatic fishermen and political prisoners are examples of the sombre fare with which we have been served since the war. Personally, if I cannot have the Marx Brothers at the Opera I shall be happy to compromise with capricious widows and conniving footmen against an eighteenth-century back-drop.

Tweet-hic-Tweet

SIR DAVID ECCLES appears to be making rather heavy weather over his starlings and I shall be interested to learn how he fares with the latest scare imported from America—a broadcast of the danger call of a trapped starling. I commend to his attention an alternative method for dealing with troublesome birds invented by the 317th Maintenance and Supply Group of the U.S. Air Force at Erding, near Munich. Their aircraft parts are covered with a protective fabric coated with banana oil. The crows flock to this delicacy in hundreds and their pecking tears the fabric and exposes the costly equipment to the weather. The solution has been to bait the area with pieces of bread soaked in alcohol and then capture the

inebriated crows. The foundation of a "Tree Tops Club" in Trafalgar Square would be far more acceptable to the electorate (and to the feathered world) than some of the devilish schemes that Sir David has on his files.

Perils of Society

SURPRISE parties can fall terribly flat unless the spirit of all concerned is exceptionally willing. The wife of a prominent New Yorker had the unhappy idea of giving a surprise farewell party for Sir Gladwyn and Lady Jebb on the eve of their departure from America. The intention was that all but the two guests of honour were to appear disguised as their favourite diplomatic personage.

Rather impatiently the cream of New York Café Society scoured the history books and the theatrical costumers and a great deal of money was invested in knee-breeches and powdered wigs. Gloom was cast over these already faint-hearted preparations by the sudden death from heart failure of a favourite member of the "Group," and after much frantic telephoning the hostess decided that her guests should "come as they pleased."

Genteel Havoc

THERE was fatal prevarication, in which, rather treacherously, the host and hostess themselves joined. The evening arrived. One shudders sympathetically for the hostess when, shortly after the arrival of her (and our) beloved Mr. Lew Douglas, there began a trickle of male guests also wearing black eye-patches. Her next trial was the apparition of one of her closest friends dressed with great care to resemble (at some distance) Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, the American Ambassador to Rome.

There was a moment when it seemed that this unfortunate lady was to be alone in her fancy glory, but as Sir Gladwyn and Lady Jebb were putting forward their best diplomatic paces amidst the uneasy company and helping Mr. Gilbert Miller to adjust the high Spanish Orders with which he was caparisoned, the door was flung open and Miss Elsa Maxwell, the famous columnist, whose ear cannot have been as closely to the ground as usual, entered dressed from tricorn to buckled shoes as Mr. Benjamin Franklin.

Seeing Lessons

THERE will be a remarkable innovation at this year's Salzburg Festival—the opening of a "School of Seeing" under the direction of Mr. Oscar Kokoschka.

Oscar Kokoschka is regarded in Europe as one of the greatest artists of the century. But his work is little known in England and his frequent visits to London pass unnoticed. Last week I met this anonymous berry-bright figure who, beneath the drab attire of a confidential clerk, is a revolutionary.

"My school," he said, "is meant to teach people to see. In Goethe's time they learnt to see and to draw as a matter of course. But the official art-schools of today seem to cripple the student's eyes. That may be all right for the spectacle-makers, but it's not good for art."

Double Talk

AUTHENTICALLY eccentric remarks have a peculiar fascination for me. When the aunt of a friend of mine was asked what she would like to have for her birthday she replied: "A quarrel with a taxi-driver and some hot pork sausages."